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Alaska Wildlife

CHECKLIST

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2007



EARN YOUR FREE
EYES ON WILDLIFE
CERTIFICATE



EYES ON WILDLIFE: ALASKA

Eagles, whales, grizzly bears, and moose... Alaska abounds with wildlife on land and in the water.

How many species have you seen? Keep track with the **Eyes on Wildlife: Alaska checklist**. Earn certificates for spotting 25, 50, 75, or 100 different species. Here's how:

- Use the list inside to check off wildlife you see. You may record the specific species where we just listed a category. There is room for adding species not already listed. All wildlife must be seen alive, wild and unrestrained (not in a zoo) in Alaska.
- When you've reached 25, 50, 75, or 100 species, download your free certificate from www.eyesonwildlife.alaska.gov.

Keep a low profile.

 Binoculars, a spotting scope, or camera with a telephoto lens allows you to see animals up close without disturbing their natural behaviors. Polarized sunglasses cut the surface glare on water and make it easier to see fish and aquatic life.

 When hiking, scan for wildlife before stepping into the open of meadows, shorelines and riverbanks. When driving, use your car as a blind rather than jumping right out. Move slowly and quietly.

 Leave pets at home. Small animals can become prey for eagles and large mammals. Dogs, even when leashed, resemble predators and may disturb wildlife.

 Enjoy watching animals' natural behaviors. Resist the temptation to attract their attention with sounds. If your presence is causing an animal to stop feeding or act restless, give it more space. Be especially respectful of nesting and denning areas, rookeries and calving grounds, and critical feeding areas.

Look for clues.

 Tracks, droppings, trails, and twigs provide clues about wildlife in the area - what they are eating, where they live and when they passed through. Noticing and reading these clues adds richness to wildlife viewing.

G TIPS

Time it right.

Dawn and dusk are when many wildlife species are most active. Midday warmth energizes dragonflies and butterflies and creates thermals for eagles and hawks. Tides also influence coastal wildlife viewing opportunities.



Many wildlife species move daily and seasonally in search of food. By learning about feeding habits, you'll have a better sense of where to look for which animals, and when.

Help keep wildlife wild.

Never feed wild animals. Doing so can cause them to associate people with food, which can get them in trouble in the future. Human food can also make them sick.

Leave ‘orphaned’ or sick animals alone. Young animals that appear to be orphaned usually have parents nearby. If you’re concerned, call the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Be considerate of others.

People use and enjoy Alaska’s wildlife in a variety of ways. Respect private property and give hunters, anglers, and others plenty of space.

Alaska's Varied Landscapes

The **coastal rain forest** is home to deer, bears, flying squirrels, bald eagles, and a multitude of birds. In the adjacent marine waters, you'll find whales, seals, sea lions, and sea otters. Rocky coastlines host a variety of intertidal animals, and millions of salmon congregate each year at river mouths before migrating upstream to spawn. At high elevations in the treeless alpine, deer, mountain goats, grouse, brown bears, and ptarmigan may be seen. Look for moose in mainland river valleys.



Boreal forests of spruce, birch, aspen, and poplar cover much of Interior Alaska. This is the habitat of moose, marten, lynx, bears, sparrows, chickadees, thrushes, woodpeckers, hawks, and owls.

Interspersed in the forest are lakes and rivers where loons, swans, ducks, beavers, swallows, and frogs can be found. Swampy muskegs are frequented by moose and insect-eating birds. In mountain regions, you can find Dall's sheep, caribou, marmots, bears, wolves, ptarmigan, and golden eagles.

Tundra dominates in western and northern coastal areas of Alaska. A host of shorebirds, swans, loons, jaegers, and waterfowl breed and raise their young in coastal wetlands. Moist tundra meadows are home to an abundance of voles, shrews, and lemmings, which in turn feed foxes, wolves, raptors, and owls. Taller shrub thickets along river drainages shelter brown bears, moose, and songbirds. In the higher, drier alpine tundra, look for plovers, gyrfalcons, ptarmigan, Arctic ground squirrels, caribou, wolves, and brown bears. Musk oxen are tundra dwellers that may be found in portions of western and northern Alaska.

Seasonal Highlights

Alaska is so large that seasons vary in length and timing by location, offering dramatically different wildlife viewing experiences. For details on specific regions, check the wildlife calendars at www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov.

Summer: Salmon crowd freshwater rivers and streams as they return from the ocean to spawn; black and brown bears gather to feed on them. In southern coastal waters, you may see whales, sea lions, seals, and porpoises. Look for Dall's sheep ewes and lambs on grassy alpine slopes, and mountain goat nannies and kids along steep cliffs. In the northern coastal tundra, caribou herds gather to calve and feed. Wolf pups emerge from dens.

Fall: Moose, goats, sheep, caribou, and muskoxen compete for mates against backdrops of fall colors and snow. Red squirrels busily gather and cache spruce cones for the long winter. Large groups of geese, cranes, waterfowl, and shorebirds gather in coastal wetlands before flying south.

Winter: Snow and frozen rivers provide a way to track often elusive animals such as wolves, lynx, marten, wolverine, and river otter. Moose are easy to spot along trails and roads in Southcentral Alaska as they seek to avoid deep snow.

Spring: New shoots of vegetation attract Dall's sheep, mountain goats, and bears. Look for them on lower, south-facing mountain slopes. Spring also brings geese, ducks, swans, cranes, loons, and shorebirds north to Alaska's wetlands. In the interior and mountainous areas, the darker coats of bears, wolves, and wolverines stand out against the remaining snow.



Safety Around Wildlife

Alaska is a wild land from our largest cities to our most remote islands. For safety, take a companion, let someone know your plans, and be prepared for emergencies with spare clothes, plenty of food and water, and a means of communication. Visit the Alaska State Parks' Staying Safe web page before you head out: www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/safety.

Bears: Avoid surprising bears. Be alert along noisy streams, in thick brush, and when visibility is poor. Make noise (sing, clap, talk) when traveling. Always keep your belongings (backpack, food, fish, etc.) with you or in bear-proof storage.

If you see a bear, stay calm. If the bear does not notice you, quietly leave, keeping your eyes on the bear. If it does notice you, face the bear, wave your arms and talk to it calmly. If it approaches you, stand still.



If a bear is surprised at close distance, it may feel threatened and act defensively, especially if it has cubs or food. Stand your ground! If the bear strikes or bites you, lie on your front, protect your face and neck and remain still. In rare instances, bears may be predatory. Fight back if the attack is prolonged.

Moose: Never approach, corner, or feed a moose. Moose, especially cows with calves, can be aggressive and need plenty of room. When in moose country, keep your dog in control. Pay attention to moose body language. Ears back, neck hair raised, and licking lips signal stress. Retreat quickly! If a moose charges you, hide behind a tree or something solid or run if you have a head start. If you're knocked down, curl up, protect your head, and lie still until the moose retreats.

EYES ON WILDLIFE: ALASKA CHECKLIST

LAND MAMMALS

- Bat _____
- Bear, black _____
- Bear, brown (grizzly) _____
- Bear, polar _____
- Beaver _____
- Caribou _____
- Coyote _____
- Deer, Sitka black-tailed _____
- Ermine (weasel) _____
- Fox, Arctic _____
- Fox, red _____
- Goat, mountain _____
- Hare, Arctic _____
- Hare, snowshoe _____
- Lemming _____
- Lynx _____

MARINE MAMMALS

- Killer whale (orca) _____
- Otter, sea _____
- Porpoise, Dall's _____
- Porpoise, harbor _____
- Sea lion, Steller _____
- Seal, harbor _____

FISH & AMPHIBIANS

- Char, Arctic _____
- Frog _____
- Grayling, Arctic _____
- Halibut, Pacific _____
- Herring, Pacific _____

MARINE INVERTEBRATES

- Anemone _____
- Clam _____
- Crab _____
- Jellyfish _____

Birders: A complete birds of Alaska checklist is available at www.birding.alaska.gov.

When you've identified 25, 50, 75 or 100 species, go to www.eyesonwildlife.alaska.gov and download a free certificate of achievement. Record specific species names, if you know them, in the blank spaces. For example, after Marmot, add hoary.

- Marmot _____
- Marten _____
- Mink _____
- Moose _____
- Muskox _____
- Muskrat _____
- Otter, river _____
- Pika _____
- Porcupine _____
- Sheep, Dall's _____
- Shrew _____
- Squirrel, Arctic ground _____
- Squirrel, red _____
- Vole _____
- Wolf _____
- Wolverine _____

SEABIRDS

- Auklet _____
- Guillemot _____
- Gull _____
- Jaeger _____
- Kittiwake _____
- Murre _____
- Murrelet _____
- Puffin _____
- Tern _____

LAND BIRDS

- Bunting _____
- Chickadee _____
- Crossbill _____
- Crow, northwestern _____
- Dipper, American _____
- Flicker, northern _____
- Flycatcher _____
- Grosbeak, pine _____
- Grouse _____
- Hummingbird _____
- Jay _____
- Junco, dark-eyed _____
- Kingfisher, belted _____
- Kinglet _____
- Longspur _____
- Magpie, black-billed _____
- Pipit _____
- Ptarmigan _____
- Raven, common _____
- Robin, American _____
- Sapsucker _____
- Siskin, pine _____
- Sparrow _____
- Swallow _____
- Thrush _____
- Warbler _____
- Woodpecker _____
- Wren, winter _____

WADING & SHOREBIRDS

- Crane, sandhill _____
- Dowitcher _____
- Godwit _____
- Heron, great blue _____
- Oystercatcher, black _____
- Phalarope _____
- Plover _____
- Sandpiper _____
- Snipe, Wilson's _____
- Turnstone _____
- Yellowlegs _____

DUCKS, GEESE, SWANS

- Cormorant _____
- Duck, harlequin _____
- Eider _____
- Goldeneye _____
- Goose _____
- Grebe _____
- Loon _____
- Mallard _____
- Merganser _____
- Pintail, northern _____
- Scaup _____
- Scoter _____
- Shoveler, northern _____
- Swan _____
- Teal _____
- Wigeon _____

BIRDS OF PREY

- Eagle, bald _____
- Eagle, golden _____
- Falcon _____
- Hawk _____
- Owl _____

ADDITIONAL SPECIES

- _____
- _____
- _____



In Alaska one can find more than 100 species of mammals, 400 species of birds, 500 species of fish, eight species of amphibians, and untold numbers of terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates, from dragonflies to jellyfish.

Explore Alaska and discover the diversity of our wildlife. Earn certificates when you identify 25, 50, 75, and 100 species. To learn more, go to www.eyesonwildlife.alaska.gov.

Ways to Help Wildlife

 Put the needs of wildlife first while viewing.

 Participate in habitat restoration projects.

 Join a wildlife conservation group.

 Support fish and wildlife conservation. Learn more about the Alaska Fish and Game Fund, watchable wildlife account, by calling 907-465-4190.



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For more information:

- **U.S. Forest Service**
www.fs.fed.us/r10/ro/naturewatch
- **Alaska Department of Fish and Game**
www.wildlifewatching.alaska.gov
- **Alaska State Parks**
www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks
- **National Park Service**
www.nps.gov/akso
- **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**
alaska.fws.gov
- **Bureau of Land Management**
www.ak.blm.gov
- **Alaska Wilderness Rec. & Tourism Assn.**
www.awrta.org
- **Alaska Travel Industry Association**
www.travelalaska.com

Helpful publications

Alaska Wildlife Viewing Guide \$8.95

Fairbanks Area Wildlife Watching Guide \$5.95

Anchorage Wildlife Viewing Hot Spots \$5.95

Inside Passage Wildlife Viewing Guide \$5.95

Available at bookstores or by calling 907-465-4190.

Details at www.eyesonwildlife.alaska.gov.



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marmot photo by Jamie Karnik © ADF&G.*

